

VOICES 4 YOUTH

Volume 2 Issue 3

Summer 2009

FLOYD COUNTY
YOUTH
SERVICES
BUREAU



Don't Dump It, Donate It

2008 was the first year for on-campus student housing at IUS. This presented a perfect opportunity for the shelter to strengthen our bonds with the academic community. In April, Rita Sasse, our Community Liaison, made contact with Jen Compton and Nikki Rhodes at the Resident's Life Housing Department on campus.

Jen and Nikki were very enthusiastic about the prospect of donating items to the shelter that the students did not want to take home. Thus began the "Don't Dump It, Donate It" campaign in the 5 lodges that make up the student housing.

Collection barrels were placed in each of the lodges' common rooms. Over the course of two weeks collections were made several times in each lodge.

Shelter residents helped with the loading, unloading and sorting of the donations. For some of our kids, it was their first glimpse of campus life. The students and staff that we met were very friendly and enjoyed talking to our teenagers about college.

We acquired over 400 pounds of food and more than 30 laundry baskets worth of clothes and linens.

We have boxes of kitchen utensils, dishes, pots and pans. New toasters, coffee makers, radios, mirrors, dust busters and papa san chairs were among the treasures we discovered.

Even those items that we couldn't use were not wasted. Staff and residents loaded up the van twice for trips to the Hosparus Thrift Store on Spring Street. Hosparus is one of several partners we share with to serve the community outside of our own walls.



Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social

Centenary United Methodist Church has had ties with the Youth Shelter for quite awhile. We share resources with their "Christ's Kitchen" program that feeds the homeless. Our teacher, Eddie Jones is also their music director. This February, Roger Ketterer let

us know that the church men's group had decided to adopt us as their 2009 project. This involves volunteering and donations from 2 fundraisers. The first was an Ice Cream Social on July 11 in the activities hall. We took several of our resi-

dents and had a good time listening to a cappella choir presentations and eating more ice cream and cookies than was healthy. We didn't know that all the extra goodies were coming home with us for everyone to enjoy!

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Faith in Action Mural | 2 |
| A Letter from Leah | 2 |
| General Mills One Great Neighbor | 3 |
| New Directions | 4 |

Come Join Us

September 13 at Comedy Caravan for a Family Friendly Show Tickets are \$15

Oct 30 for our first "Trunk or Treat" Halloween celebration. Prizes and safe fun.

Details for both at (812)948-5481

Faith in Action and Deanery Volunteers

The week of July 5 was retreat and community service time for the Deanery youth. (The Deanery is a collaboration of the Catholic parishes in Floyd, Clark and Harrison Counties.)

High school students from 17 churches came together and had 4 locations at which to volunteer, including our shelter. We started with a project to paint a mural on the library wall. A different group of teens showed up each morning in their neon orange T-shirts em-

blazoned with ACTfaithION on the front.

Ashley Cecil, an artist with the Louisville Visual Arts Association, worked with the kids by designing and drawing the mural. She then spent each morning coaching the kids and refining the work.

Afternoons were spent sorting in the clothing closet, culling out torn and old books and games from the library shelves and finally painting the library with a fresh coat of yellow.

Each day the various groups were given a tour of the shelter and explanation of our programs and how kids come to live here. Many of them took our "Needs List" back to their home parishes. As a result, we have a group that will be doing an underwear drive for us this

fall. Having lunch with our residents brought home the reality to the Deanery kids that our kids could be their friends, neighbors or family.

On Sunday, July 5, as this retreat started for the Deanery kids, they made 4 decorative stepping stones to present to each of the volunteer locations. Ours is a flower with a ladybug. It's at our front entrance for all to enjoy. Feel free to stop by and check out the artwork.



Leah's letter *Leah Pezzarossi, Executive Director since 2004*

In writing this letter, I enlisted the help of the children. They are here for a myriad of reasons, suspected physical abuse, running away, sexual abuse, and not listening to parents are a few. The discussion was an honest one.

I first asked the children to describe their experiences in the shelter. Of course, they began with the negatives. As expected, the kids, for the most part, find removal from home to be difficult. Some of the children's quotes were, "You miss home", "It's hard to get ready when you don't have all of your stuff", "Sometimes you get picked on by other kids". Other common themes in the comments were missing family and having limited contact with them, missing "normal" freedoms. The children discussed the building and complained about the leaky ceilings. That was no surprise to hear. I felt the worst

when one child repeatedly said "You miss your family here."

I was heartened when one of the girls asked, "Can we start on the good stuff now?". One of the other children piped up with, "But it's like your own little family here." I was pleased to hear that we have created an environment where a child would feel that way.

Some of the comments were about the instructive nature of our programs. Several of the kids said they were learning good lessons. They enjoy the field trips, the food (for the most part), and specifically stated that they felt the staff would talk to them about their problems, "they make you feel good around here", and act as role models in teaching them to "do right".

Lastly, I asked the kids about the circumstances leading to removal from home. The children placed because of abuse in the home didn't want to talk. The children who were there because of their own behavior quickly shelled out this advice to other kids, "Don't do drugs, don't talk back, and don't runaway." I asked them what lead them to these behaviors. One child stated, "Drugs are a business in my family." Another said, "Drugs have just always been around my house." One child who ran away due to alleged abuse stated, "Things weren't going the way I wanted, so I had to do something different."

It was a great conversation and I am glad I could share it with you.

Leah Pezzarossi

General Mills Community Service in High Gear



General Mills/Pillsbury plant is located less than half a mile from the shelter. But when the opportunity to have work crews from the plant spend a couple of days with us, we found out what great neighbors they really are. During a routine May plant shut-down, the employees are invited to work in the community and we had 41 great folks, many from engineering, with us performing minor miracles.

Using donations of lumber, hardware and shingles from Lowe's in Clarksville, W-M Lumber of New Albany and Commonwealth Roofing in Louisville, the crew

designed and built new picnic tables and a wonderful roof over the entrance to the back of the shelter. We can now unload deliveries and come and go while staying out of the rain and snow!

The entire building got quite a facelift with weed whacking, lawn mowing and general clean-up. The first floor windows were washed inside and out—for the first time in over a decade. The difference was startling—some staff thought we had gotten new lighting. Mr. Clean has nothing on the group of ladies that cleaned



over 50 windows.

The stairwell leading up to the boys' dorm is 20 feet tall and finally got a new coat of paint thanks to the ingenuity of Jody Crawhorn and the engineering crew.

Our growing clothing closet was in need of shelf supports and a good re-organization. Again the women came to the rescue. In addition to reorganizing the closet they volunteered for a laundry brigade.

Several weeks after the official workweek for General Mills



was over, 10 women returned during the worst thunderstorm in memory to pick up 25 loads of donated clothes and linens and clean them all at a local laundry-mat. These had been items picked up from the IUS dormitory move-out project. Tonya Gullledge was the organizer and the Salaried Women's Group knocked out this task in less than 3 hours.

Our relationship continues to grow with various folks from General Mills. They have proven to be great neighbors indeed.



**FLOYD COUNTY
YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU**

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The shelter is looking for a sponsor of the Voices 4 Youth newsletter. Contact Rita Sasse at 812-948-5481 for details

New Directions Grand Summer

New Directions is our community outreach program that works with children at risk of failure in 8 of our local elementary and middle schools. This program runs all year long with summer enrichment programs that involve trips to local attractions.

The kids accompany Miss Jennifer and Miss Kim in small groups to places like the zoo, Falls of the Ohio, swimming and Derby Dinner Playhouse children's lunch offerings. In these small groups, our staff can stay connected to the kids on a

personal level. Entire families are known to the New Directions staff and assistance isn't limited to the child enrolled in the program. A child can be a part of the program from 3rd grade to 8th, adding a great deal of continuity to what often is a home life that lacks structure or resources.

Each year as the summer program winds down and everyone gets ready to head back to school, New Directions hosts a party where awards are handed out for summer accom-

plishments. Lunch and school supplies are provided for everyone. This year the party was held on August 8 at the General Mills Assembly Hall. About 80 kids got a jump on the school year with new supplies and great memories of a busy summer.

